

# FOREIGN NEWS

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## ORGANIZATION NOTES AND CURRENT EVENTS

A SURVEY of our sisters' activities in other parts of the world shows much of interest and promise, with an occasional crisis here and there.

### IN CANADA.

LATELY a bill was brought before Parliament providing for a Canadian Nurses' Association. It seemed to be supported by but a small body of nurses, with an indefinite background of medical men. The draft of the bill was in brief as follows: Six nurses, mentioned by name, were to be incorporated under the above title, "together with such persons as become members of the Association." ("*Such persons*" meaning who?) No objects were stated, but revenue and profits accruing were to be used solely for the "objects" of the Association.

The eligibility list included two-years' graduates of general hospitals of a certain size, and six-months' students of lying-in hospitals. Membership was to be conditional on the approval of an Advisory Board composed of medical men. Branches were to be established in the Provinces and "For the better government of the Association" this "Advisory Board of medical practitioners may be annually elected at the annual meeting of the Association: Such board may require candidates for membership in the Association to submit to examination; may impose penalties for unprofessional conduct; rescind certificates of membership for cause, and exercise a surveillance over the affairs of the Association."

We recommend study of this bill as a complete and perfect bad example. It is precisely everything that a bill for nurses ought not to be. No legislation at all is infinitely preferable to pernicious legislation.

Thanks to the wisdom and foresight of Mr. Ross Robertson, M.P., the bill was brought to the notice of nurses throughout the Dominion, with the result that it was withdrawn. That the medical men supporting it had done so with excellent intentions is evidenced by the fact that upon learning the objections they not only acquiesced therein, but promised to support a genuinely representative and self-governing nurses' association, under which, we hope, Canadian nurses will take full and dignified control of their professional development.

## IN ENGLAND.

ALL who are interested in organization will feel the newly formed League of St. Bartholomew's Nurses to be of deep import. The League is similar in its spirit, scope, and plans to our alumnae associations, and is the first organization of the kind among nurses in Great Britain. It is pleasant to know that our influence had some share in stimulating its formation. However, even without that it would doubtless have taken rise. The League has already a membership of several hundred, has published its journal, and is prepared to take a serious position on public questions. The president asks the members to study all matters relating to the profession, and especially the subject of legal registration, the need of which grows daily more urgent.

The Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland has gone on record for its public-spirited activities in many lines. To mention briefly its more important actions during the past eighteen months:

It initiated and successfully carried through a nursing sub-section of the professional section of the International Congress of Women held last June a year ago in London: Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, convener and chairman of the professional section, had with her on the committee Miss Isla Stewart, matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital; Miss Louisa Stevenson, of the board of managers of the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, and Miss M. Huxley, of St. Patrick Dun's Hospital, Dublin.\* At a subsequent meeting of the Matrons' Council a resolution offered by Mrs. Fenwick was unanimously carried, proposing the formation of an international organization of nurses.

A resolution was sent to the dean of Durham,—a woman's college having been established in connection with Durham University,—advocating the establishment of a chair of clinical nursing. This resolution, laid by the warden before the senate, was by them referred to the Council of Medicine, by whom it was disapproved. This, however, is only the initial history of all higher education, and need cause no discouragement. The Matrons' Council, in its action, has set a courageous and also an original example.

The council is at present and has been for some time actively interesting itself in nursing reforms in the army and navy, having petitioned both the Admiralty and the War Office for hearings. Their resolutions, reports, schedules of needed changes and organization plans, incidental relations with the daily press, and letters bringing the matter before the

\* The published proceedings of the Congress may be had from Mrs. Fannie Humphreys Gaffney, 41 Riverside Drive, New York City.

public have meant an enormous amount of work. Space does not allow a full report of these proceedings, which may be found in the *Nursing Record* of May, June, July, and August of the current year.

Miss Isla Stewart is publishing, in collaboration with Dr. Herbert Cuff, a book on "Practical Nursing," in which she advocates a central preliminary college, certification, and registration.

#### IN DENMARK.

THE Danish nurses have in the last year formed a national council, and we learn some interesting details of their progress. They have had, as is perfectly natural, trouble between the modern progressive members and the "hardshells," who are afraid of individual freedom. Perhaps they tried to go ahead too fast at first, under the leadership of a nurse who is also prominent for her active interest in industrial, educational, and political questions. There was a reaction, and the old-time element came into full power, which it still holds. The liberal Danish nurses wanted to work for a higher standard of theoretical teaching, shorter working hours, and a lessened degree of subordination in their general affairs. Reports and communications have been sent to them from several of our *alumnæ* societies, and schedules of hours in our hospitals having the eight-hour system. They hope for our help and support in their efforts, and every American nurse should respond to their wish.

We wish them final success, and, meantime, toleration for their obstructionists, remembering that change of ideas cannot be produced by an effort of the will alone, but requires an actual physical alteration in the brain-cells and the distribution of the blood supply to the brain.

#### IN HOLLAND.

HOLLAND has its Dutch Association for Sick-Nursing, which has been in existence for seven years. It has established the standard of three years' training, and has been instrumental in effecting various reforms relating to the nursing staff in hospitals. Certain provisions are made to nurses for financial aid in illness, and the association has also provided courses in cookery for the sick for nurses, this branch of instruction being apparently lacking in the hospital curriculum. The association seems to be organized on lines similar to those of the German nursing associations, and publishes a monthly journal.

A new organization has recently been founded in Holland, called the "Dutch Association for furthering the Interests of Male and Female Nurses." It is not yet quite clear to us what policy and objects characterize this new association. The nurses themselves, apparently, take no

very direct interest in the Association for Sick-Nursing, as the secretary complains that few of them attend meetings. Vexatious questions considered at the last meeting were those relating to the protection of private duty nurses from the quack nurse, and to the standing of nurses taught only in hospitals for the insane. The "Hague Committee for the Training of Nurses" desired to join the Association for Sick Nursing. This committee, however, besides training women in a general curriculum, also gives certificates to women who have worked for but one year in an asylum for the insane, and a number of medical men protested against receiving it into membership, on the ground that a general training could not be had in an asylum for the insane; however, against opposition, it was elected in, and the certificates of the association will now be bestowed equally upon the one-year asylum pupil and the three-year hospital student. In our opinion this is an unavoidable feature of early stages of organization, and though a very crude and ill-fitting adjustment, need be only temporary. By coming together to this extent the asylum system and hospital system are more likely to modify each other, so that in time a minimum basis of general training will be acknowledged as necessary for every nurse before she gives herself up to a specialty.

The bogus nurse seems to be giving them some trouble in Holland, and their way out of it seems to them to lie in the direction of a closer guardianship of trained nurses in homes under the control of societies.

#### IN GERMANY.

WE extract the following from the journal of the Red Cross Societies:

"The Imperial Commissioner and Military Inspector of the Society of the Red Cross has made the following announcement: 'The often-proved devotion and self-sacrifice of the voluntary nursing societies of the German Fatherland have again offered every possible aid in the struggle with China. It is to be expected that the Red Cross will rush supplies of every kind for the comfort of our soldiers. In order that all free gifts may be turned to the highest efficiency in corresponding to requirements, I hereby give notice that all offers of service, of appliances and conveniences, as well as all contributions of money, are to be sent to the authorized organization, the German Red Cross Society, and its affiliated orders, through whose officers it will reach me and so be used for the work of the sanitary service of the army. With reference to the above announcement it is to be noticed that the chairman of the German societies to provide nursing in the colonies has placed her services at the disposal of the Red Cross Central Committee and of the Marine Service, for

the work of sending out nursing sisters. All offers of help, whether from fully trained nurses or untrained women, are to be addressed to her excellency Frau von S——, Berlin.' ”

WE hope in later numbers to have accounts of the nurses' organization of Sydney, New South Wales, “The Trained Nurses' Reunion,” and of the system of registration in South Africa.

IN strong contrast to the reports from military hospitals where trained nurses are established are the shocking facts brought before the public by Mr. Burdett-Coutts relating to the English army, and by Miss Margaret Astor Chanler, fearless member of a family of reformers. Even the discreet correspondent of *Harper's Weekly* hints at reasons why the soldiers in the Philippines are not all cared for as well as those in a few hospitals where the nurses are. Perhaps it is not proper to criticise War Departments severely for these things, and it may be that we are still laboring under a belated mediævalism of ideas in romantically idealizing the military genius so far as to expect tender consideration for life to be united with ruthless destructiveness. It does not seem logical for a public opinion enthusiastically to endorse war and clamor for the utmost stress of exertion from military men, and then to abuse them for not having the comforts of civilization at hand.

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MISS AMY B. HILL, of the New York Hospital, writes:

“HIGH SEAS, August 7.

“My call to South Africa came at last unexpectedly; I am one of twenty nurses on the way to Cape Town. Beyond this we do not know our destination, but expect to be dispersed up country.”

MISS H. L. GADDIS, Garfield Memorial Hospital, sends some items from Las Animas Hospital, Havana:

“August, 1900.

“At present we have twenty-seven yellow-fever patients. Every ounce of water they drink is recorded on the minute. All urine is measured and recorded. Each patient has a cleansing bath daily.

“For high temperature, cold enemas every three hours, ice packs, and ice sponge-baths are given. For the first few days they are given no nourishment, but plenty of water, Vichy, and lime juice. When they begin on milk they usually have at first a half ounce, increased very gradually up to three or four ounces, when they are promoted to ice-cream and milk-toast.”

[Further items on yellow-fever nursing with charts from Miss Gaddis will follow.—ED.]

MRS. QUINTARD is at the General Hospital, Puerto Principe, Cuba. She says:

"Puerto Principe is thirty years behind the times; it has never occurred to the people that the sick could be cared for decently, and the very name 'hospital' stands for everything vile and unpleasant. . . . We expect to be ready to receive patients in a few weeks. The work of obtaining probationers progresses, and I am confident that when we open we shall have plenty."

[The hospital is a civil one, and it is intended that young Cuban women shall be trained as nurses.—ED.]

"SANTA MESA U. S. A. HOSPITAL, MANILA, PHILIPPINES.

". . . The Nurses' Home is an old Spanish palace on the prettiest street in town. On entering the large hall, or court, you see an old fountain and the broad, winding stairway leading up to the large dining- and reception-rooms. These still contain some of the old Spanish furniture. . . . At present there are eight hospitals in the islands that I know of where the women nurses are at work. Many of the cases are such that they must have men to care for them. This hospital has a capacity of one thousand; it is on elevated ground, four miles from Manila, and we have all the breezes there are. The forty buildings make quite a village,—built in native style, hard wood and bamboo frames covered with Nipe grass. We have a good Chinese cook and boy to help. The nurses are on eight-hour duty. They carry out medical orders and supervise the work of the hospital corps men.

"We have been much interested in visiting a little native mother. To get into her hut we had to climb a bamboo ladder; inside everything was neat and clean. Mother and babe lay on mats on the floor, with round rolls for pillows and screened off, so as to get no air. It is their custom to remain so for thirty days, neither mother nor child being bathed in water during that time, but rubbed with cocoanut oil. The baby's cord was dressed with pieces of linen and a brown powder.

"A. A. ROBBINS."

[Letters from England, India, Denmark, Italy, China, and the Klondyke are held over for future issues.—ED.]